

**ADMH Division of Developmental Disabilities**  
**Coordinating Subcommittee Zoom Meeting Summary**  
**September 7, 2021**

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**Participants:** 256 Participants (DDD Subcommittee Members and Providers)

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**Voting Members Present:**

Connie Batiste, ADMH/DDD Representative  
DeAnna Ferguson, Ph.D., Other Providers–VOA Representative  
Jo Poates, AADD Representative  
Janna Haggard, AADD Representative  
Darryle Powell, Sr., Alabama DD Council Representative  
Delshonda Thomas, ACE/Arc Representative  
Timothy Cooper, Arc of Alabama Representative  
Jamie Herren, Alabama Council/MH Centers Representative  
Ken Oliver, Alabama MH Centers Representative  
Jenny Lux, People First of Alabama Representative  
Susan Ellis, People First of Alabama Representative  
Anne Riddle for Jane Cameron, Arc of Alabama Family Representative

**Voting Members Absent:**

Rita Wingard, ADMH/DDD Representative

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**1. Welcome and Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Associate Commissioner Pezent.

**2. Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was revised by AC Pezent. “ID/LAH Waiver Update” was deleted from agenda. “HCBS Validation Compliance Data” was deleted from the agenda. Mr. Oliver made a motion to accept the revised agenda, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Powell. The motion was approved.

**3. Approval of July 13, 2021 Minutes:** A motion was made by Ms. Ellis to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cooper. The minutes were approved.

**4. Associate Commissioner’s Updates (Terry Pezent):**

Thanks to Mr. Tucker for identifying and coordinating the guest speaker, Dr. Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Community Living, Washington, D.C.

A 30-day Operational Guidelines (OG) process has been developed. AC Pezent shared the process and procedure on the zoom screen and provided an overview of the steps. The OG process will be posted to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) website today. It was pointed out that the process was vetted at the DDD Subcommittee stakeholders’ workgroup meeting. The process changed because there was a need for more time to review, approve, and implement the OGs. It was requested that the DDD Subcommittee Voting Members be posted to DDD website. The OG Manual is released quarterly, but the revised OGs are always presented, highlighted in yellow, and posted on DDD website.

The stakeholders' workgroup representative from the DDD Subcommittee is Dr. Deanna Ferguson. Going forward, Dr. Ferguson will provide updates from the stakeholders' workgroup meeting. The workgroup has been looking at how other states have been using the 10% FMAP federal match, including the American Rescue Act. The Commissioner will have a meeting regarding this next week. Also, there is an RFP for Rate Study. The deadline was September 15, 2021, to receive responses.

**Alabama Workforce Council (Ada Katherine Van Wyhe):** An update was provided on the Alabama Workforce Council's joint effort between the Governor's office and ADMH's application for federal relief funds relative to economic development and workforce. In mid-June, an eight (8) question survey was sent out to ADMH/DDD and ADMH/MI/SA providers. There were only 152 survey responses out of 500 providers. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the providers indicated they are not connected to or not familiar with Alabama Workforce. Only 20% of our providers are connected to the Alabama Workforce Council. This indicates ADMH should provide an individualized approach on connecting providers to the Alabama Workforce Council's structure and support. This will ensure providers' vacancies are published, marketed, and given the resources necessary for their recruitment and retention. Ada Katherine Van Wyhe will ensure detailed information regarding the Alabama Workforce Council and Alabama Works be sent to all providers. It is important to have all data from providers to justify ADMH's case is included to receive grants.

**Appendix K Update and Funding (Terry Pezent):** The approval for the 30% rate increase was received. Providers should begin voiding and replacing billing claims. If there are any challenges, please reach out to Rebecca Keith. A communication regarding this was sent to providers last week.

**COVID Vaccinations (Florine Croxton):** The September 2, 2021, vaccination data report, by region, was presented. Support coordinators are designated to enter the vaccination data in ADIDIS. Kendra Eidson and Chris Stewart felt that the presented information did not reflect their agency's data. AC Pezent will address this issue. It was recommended that Ms. Keith add a field in ADIDIS for booster vaccinations. COVID test guidelines and vaccination information from the CDC website was shared on the zoom screen. A discussion was held. Dr. Ferguson noted that ANCOR is providing grants to certain states for ID direct care workers who are hesitant about being vaccinated. The grants assist with educational information such as tool kits and videos regarding the importance of the vaccination. Vicki Turnage noted ASAM has a grant to work with low vaccination rates. They will be collaborating with People First of Alabama.

- 5. Office of Administration and Fiscal Operations (Andy Slate):** Under the Appendix K, the 30% rate increase is effective May 1 through November 30, 2021. Due to the workforce crisis, the increase is for recruitment and retention. A notice was sent to providers to submit their recruitment and retention plans but so far, only 68 plans were received (which means 118 plans have not been received). The plans are required in order for providers to receive the rate increase. In December 2021, a template will be sent to providers to report the impact the increases had on their workforce. Providers' unemployment rates before the 30% will be compared to their unemployment rates at the end of November 2021. Dr. Ferguson requested that Mr. Slate keep in mind that a lot of providers were not able to implement their recruitment until after the funds were received.

6. **CWP (Byron White):** Thanks to providers for submitting the employment survey which is required for the National Core Indicators (NCI) data. Employment staff will contact supported employment providers. ADMH is still awaiting official approval notice from CMS, but plans are still moving forward. Seventy percent (70%) of the allocated slots across the five regions are accounted for. Interviews are being conducted for vacant CWP support coordinator positions. Training and provider recruitment are two major pieces of the CWP work which are ongoing. The provider network manager continues to ensure there are sufficient providers per service, per region. Currently, there are 37 CWP providers across 11 counties. Providers continue to receive training through QuiLLTs and specialized training through the Columbus organization.
7. **HCBS Stakeholders Workgroup (Terry Pezent):** A decision was made during the workgroup meeting to determine which providers should be submitted to CMS for heightened scrutiny. The first HCBS compliance letter was sent to providers regarding non-compliance. The second HCBS compliance letter will be disseminated within the next two weeks. Providers should continue to work toward compliance, specifically, addressing those areas agreed upon in their transition to compliance plans. Additional information will be shared within the next two weeks.

**HCBS Technical Assistance and Training (Connie Batiste):** The Quality Enhancement (QE) staff will provide training to assist agencies in becoming fully compliant with the HCBS Rule Setting by October 1, 2022. This training will focus on service areas with the highest percentages of agency of non-compliance. Trainings will be held in each region and technical assistance provided as needed. A training schedule will be communicated to providers this month. The training will also be posted on the website.

**Statewide Transition Plan Status (Rebecca Wright):** The statewide transition plan is pending submission upon receiving the validation data. Medicaid is working with ADMH on analyzing the data. For instance, settings that are isolated versus settings that are not isolated. Information will be available for submission to CMS soon. There will be more information available at the next meeting.

8. **Office of Support Coordination Services (Francilla Allen):** The next Person-Centered Planning (PCP) training will be held September 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The PCP letter associated with the training and registration was communicated to all Support Coordination (SC) agencies. Please ensure new support coordinators attend the training and adhere to the guidelines indicated in the letter. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, from 1:30pm to 3:30pm and on September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00am to 2:00pm, DDD will provide training regarding the Alabama Medicaid Agency (AMA) Record Review and Corrective Action Plan. A reminder was sent to all support agencies indicating this information was sent to SC executive directors and supervisors. The training is for all support coordinators. Weeks ago, self-directed services training was provided to the Employer of Records (EORs) as well as support coordination agencies. SC agencies are asked to share this information with all support coordinators. The 30% rate increase was shared with both financial agencies for self-directed services and the EORs. All EORs were asked to submit recruitment and retention plans related to the use of the rate increase.

**9. Office of Community Services (Amy Waren):** Regional offices continue to monitor and complete validation data. Monthly providers meetings are ongoing.

**10. Office of Certification Services (Connie Batiste):** Angela Simpson is now the new Certification staff in Region 3. Jimmy Paulk has retired, effective October 1, 2021.

**11. Alabama Medicaid Agency (AMA) (Riyyah James):** There was no update by Ms. James. Susan Klingel indicated she is experiencing Medicaid billing issues with prevoc and prevoc in the community. Ms. James suggested Ms. Klingel email issues to Rebecca Keith and then Medicaid will work to resolve the prevoc billing issues.

**12. Advocacy Updates**

- a. **People First:** Jenny Lux provided an update. Next week is the national disabilities voter registration week. Her email address was entered in the chat box so that she can create an email list for next year to continue the work to get individuals with DD/ID to register to vote.
- b. **ADAP:** James Tucker provided an update. ADAP is doing a joint effort with the Alabama DD Council, and also share a grant with the DD Network regarding efforts to support and access COVID vaccinations. ADAP is doing a three-month campaign with the Alabama Broadcasters Association and will gladly do joint training with others. The DD Network is made up of three entities, ADAP, Alabama DD Council, and UAB/UCED. They have been working on several projects.
- c. **ACDD:** Darryle Powell provided an update. The Alabama DD council has been talking with Byron White and Harrison Black regarding collaboration around the CWP services. The Alabama DD Council has also received a grant regarding campaigning for vaccination. Marketing materials have been placed at Dollar General Stores and on gas pumps throughout the state. The Partners and Policymaking Association (PIPA) will have their first session Nov 5-6, 2021. Housing and technology research are in the works. The RFPs will be posted in October 2021.
- d. **ADMH/ADVOCACY:** Diane Durbin provided an update. Advocates are available in certain services area to provide basic rights training to individuals served, staff, and families. The toll-free number is 800-367-0955

**13. Guest Speaker, Dr. Jennifer Johnson, US Department of Human Services:**

James Tucker presented a brief introduction. Dr. Johnson is the Deputy Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living, Washington, D.C. She is also the Director of AOD's Office of Disability Service Innovations which is closely tied to HCBS Transition. Before Dr. Johnson assumed her current role, she served as Deputy Director of AIDD (Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities). She mainly focuses on the highest level of establishing, researching, and implementing policies and practices for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities throughout the country.



Dr. Johnson presented on the implementation of the HCBS Settings Rule, status of COVID 19 Vaccinations, and the status of Direct Service Workforce/ Support workforce. Their agency is committed to advocating for maximizing the independence, wellbeing, and health of older adults, people with developmental disabilities across their lifespan, their families, and caregivers. Their agency ensures people with disabilities participate in all aspects of community living, including learning, growing, working, and being valued alongside of people without disabilities. The agency focuses on creating change for the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities by equipping them with the opportunities, tools, and support to make choices and to lead lives of their choice in their community. Their agency works across the lifespan of individuals with ID/DD and not only focus on adults, but they also focus on infancy, and early childhood. One of their goals is to move from a society where people with disabilities are institutionalized, isolated, discriminated against, and impoverished to a society where individuals with disabilities are living in the community and actively and meaningfully participating in the community, and having financial independence and self-determination. This goal is accomplished in various ways, but this goal is mostly accomplished through several different national grant programs.

Their agency funds the state DD Network which is comprised of the State Council on Disabilities, the Protection and Advocacy System, and the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. In Alabama, the DD Network includes the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP), The Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, The CIVITAN International Center, and Sparks at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Johnson highlighted on other areas they fund, specifically the grants for the Independent Living Center. She also presented an overview on the different types of grants, the past 18 months' COVID pandemic, the impact of COVID, what comes next for individuals with ID/DD, and ways COVID can be used to encourage changing the lives for individuals with ID/DD, specifically moving individuals to integration. Although progress has been made to improve lives, there needs to be more improvement and COVID is an opportunity to move in that direction and build a new system.

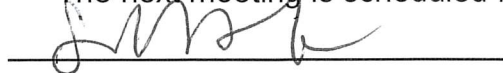
With the vaccination program, their agency is trying to ensure equity for individuals with developmental disabilities by establishing the New Resource Center for vaccinations. Dr. Johnson concluded her presentation by highlighting on the HCBS Rule Settings Rule, their agency's initiatives, and several priorities which are economic mobility, protecting rights of individuals with disabilities, preventing abuse of individuals with developmental disabilities, and the HCBS Settings Rule compliance.

#### **14. Other Business**

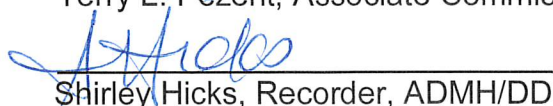
There was no other business.

#### **15. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2021.



Terry L. Pezent, Associate Commissioner/ADMH/DD

  
Shirley Hicks, Recorder, ADMH/DD